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ODP-83-523  
8 April 1983

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MEMORANDUM FOR: Chief, Information Systems Security Group, OS  
FROM:   
Chief, Management Staff, ODP  
SUBJECT: Proposed Policy Number 14  
Personal Computers for Headquarters Applications

1. ODP personnel who reviewed the draft of ISSG's Policy Number 14, Personal Computers for Headquarters Applications, expressed concern about the proposed restrictions on the use of this equipment. Unanimously, they voiced the position that the Agency should encourage the use of personal computers. Rather than overly restrict personal computer use, ISSG should develop procedures that will resolve the potential security problems. Each user should not have to reinvent these procedures. It is also our belief that these procedures need not be unnecessarily restrictive or burdensome. A balanced set of security procedures will allow this potentially valuable tool to be fully exploited by Agency personnel while minimizing security vulnerabilities.

2. In fact, the dedicated use of this type of computer system can enhance the security provided to sensitive applications by restricting access to the system during processing. In addition, if proper physical security procedures are followed, the data are better protected from inadvertent or intentional compromise than if resident in a large multi-processing system.

3. It appears there are only four areas to consider for the secure use of standalone personal computers:

a. TEMPEST. The system must be approved and meet the appropriate standard for compromising emanations.

b. Control of magnetic media. The procedures for personal computers need be no different than for word processors.

c. Control of the system. The system should not be removed from Agency control. The policy should emphasize secure procedures for maintenance.

d. Control of output. The procedures should be the same as for classified information in the paper world.

4. In our judgment, a policy statement addressing the above four issues is all that is required. It is inappropriate for

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ISSG to review the management justification for the use of a personal computer. This is not done for word processors or other types of ADP equipment. Line management should approve the use of personal computers subject to the system and the procedures for its use satisfying established security requirements.

5. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on your proposed policy on personal computers. If you have any questions or would like to explore the matter further with us, please feel free to contact the ODP Information System Security Officer, Fred

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